

Since the primary ballot included, for the first time, a direct vote for president beginning in 1952, EVERY PRESIDENT HAS WON AT LEAST ONE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY.

The New Hampshire First-in-the-Nation Presidential Primary

Centennial 1920 to 2020

Primary Dates

1916-1948 Bullock Era

March 9, 1948
March 14, 1944
March 12, 1940
March 10, 1936
March 8, 1932
March 13, 1928
March 11, 1924
March 9, 1920
March 14, 1916

1952-1976 Upton Era

February 24, 1976
March 7, 1972
March 12, 1968
March 10, 1964
March 8, 1960
March 13, 1956
March 11, 1952

Primary Dates

1980-Present Splaine Era

2020
February 9, 2016
January 10, 2012
January 8, 2008
January 27, 2004
February 1, 2000
February 20, 1996
February 18, 1992
February 16, 1988
February 28, 1984
February 26, 1980

1913 Creates New Hampshire Presidential Primary



Rep. Stephen A. Bullock
D-Richmond

Author of the law creating the New Hampshire presidential primary to choose national convention delegates during the 1913 session of the legislature, to be held on the third Tuesday in May, 1916.

1949 Adds Direct Column on Ballot for Candidates



Rep. Richard F. Upton
R-Concord

As house speaker, produced legislation in 1949 to include for the first time the names of presidential candidates on the ballot as a separate preference poll, in addition to the listing of party delegates.

1975 Requires NH Primary to be First-in-the-Nation



Rep. James R. Splaine
D-Portsmouth

Wrote the 1975 law allowing the secretary of state to set the primary date earlier than the March Election Day by seven days, if necessary. Without this law the state would not be First-in-the-Nation today. In later years he fine-tuned the law to maintain that tradition.

PILLARS

OF THE

PRIMARY

Rep. John G. M. Glessner
R-Bethlehem

In 1915, amended Rep. Bullock's law, passed in the previous session, changing the Primary date from May to Town Meeting Election Day in March.



Governor Hugh Gregg
R-Nashua

Author, historian, advisor to presidential candidates and their campaigns for over 50 years starting in 1952. Leading by example, foremost among peers, a tireless promoter of New Hampshire, and protector of its First-in-the-Nation primary.



Rep. Natalie S. Flanagan
R-Atkinson

A thirty year house member, while chair of the House Elections Committee for two decades, she sponsored (1995) and co-sponsored (1999) legislation to provide critical flexibility for the secretary of state in setting the primary date to maintain the state's First-in-the-Nation tradition.



New Hampshire's First-in-the-Nation Presidential Primary Through the Years

New Hampshire's first presidential primary was held on March 14, 1916, but was not the first in the nation. It was a week later than Indiana, and the same day as Minnesota. On March 9, 1920, New Hampshire's primary became first in the nation when Indiana changed to May, and Minnesota discontinued its primary. General Leonard Wood, born in Winchester, NH, October 9, 1860, won that first, 1920 primary. He was a famous American at the time, Commander of the Rough Riders, US Army Chief of Staff, recipient of the Medal of Honor, Governor of Cuba, Governor General of the Philippines, captured Geronimo, and a confidant of Teddy Roosevelt.

The Quiet Bullock Era 1916–1948

Delegate selection for party conventions was the sole purpose of the New Hampshire primary for the first 32 years. Delegates were listed on the ballot either pledged to a specific candidate, or uncommitted. Also, before a delegate could run as a "pledged" delegate, prior approval from the candidate was required. Delegates, however, were allowed to run "as favorable," without a candidate's approval.

The Transition Upton Era 1952–1976

The 1949 legislature passed a bill suggested by House Speaker Richard Upton, that "modernized" the primary by allowing candidates to have their names on the ballot, in addition to the delegates. The law became effective for the 1952 primary, and immediately increased interest in the state and nationally because the focus was on candidates instead of the indirect delegate selection process. The bill requested by Speaker Upton, was sponsored by Representative Rueben Spaulding Moore of Bradford.

The Challenging Splaine Era 1980–Present

New Hampshire voters today, since 1980, cast their ballots only for presidential primary candidates, and no longer for party convention delegates. These last 40 years have seen state after state opting to have presidential primaries trying to follow New Hampshire's lead - even passing laws requiring their primary to be on the same day as ours, whenever that might be. We have been able to overcome the onslaught and use the tools we have been given to keep the tradition alive, thanks to so many, who in many different ways have done their part and found ways to overcome the challenges. The tools needed were put in the toolbox by governors, legislators and party leaders to be there when needed to overcome the challenges.

Unlike other states, the people of New Hampshire have continued to fund their primary all these years. It has lasted through wars and depressions. It has lasted through states attempting to take it from us and by the national parties that have been helpful at times and not so helpful at others. Some believed television would diminish the value of the primary in the 60's and 70's, but it didn't happen. Others thought the internet and social media would diminish the primary at the beginning of this century, but that didn't happen either. We've made it 100 years with no scandals, blemishes, or miscounts. It will last another 100 years if the people of our great state have the will to keep it.

Van B.



34th PRESIDENT Dwight D. Eisenhower,
Old Man of the Mountain, Franconia Notch
Won 1952 + 1956 Primaries



35th PRESIDENT John F. Kennedy, Nashua Rotary Club
Won 1960 Primary



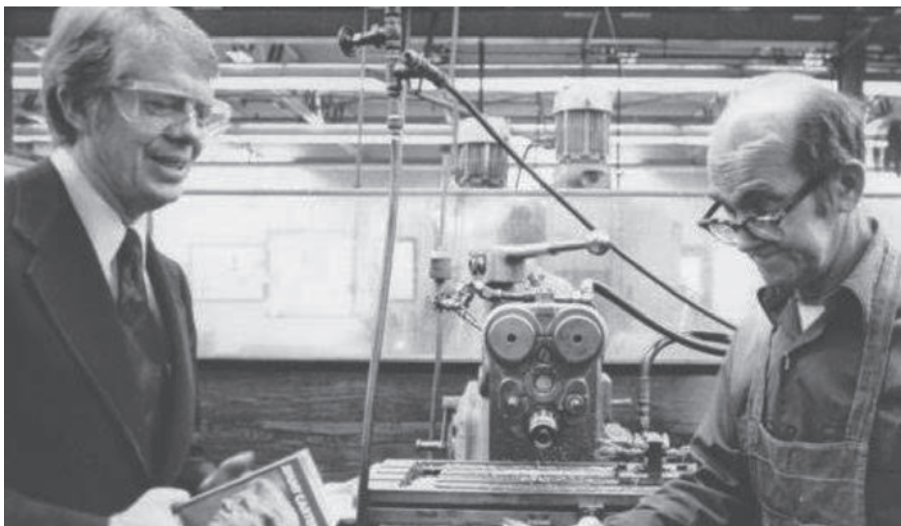
36th PRESIDENT Lyndon B. Johnson,
Carpenter Hotel, Manchester
Won 1964 Primary



37th PRESIDENT Richard M. Nixon, UNH, Durham
Won 1960 + 1968 + 1972 Primaries



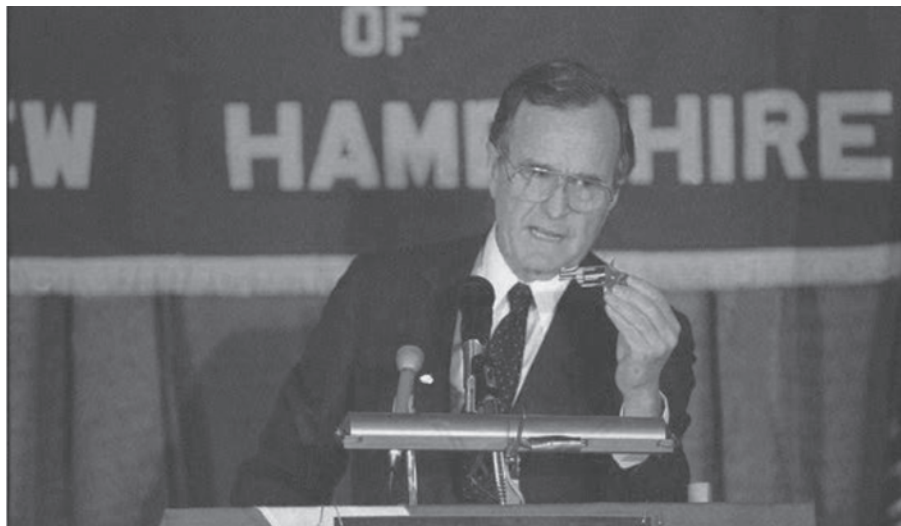
38th PRESIDENT Gerald R. Ford,
Representative's Hall, State House
Won 1976 Primary



39th PRESIDENT Jimmy Carter, Webster Valve, Franklin
Won 1976 Primary



40th PRESIDENT Ronald Reagan, Milan Town Hall
Won 1980 + 1984 Primaries



41st PRESIDENT George H. W. Bush, UNH, Durham
Won 1988 Primary



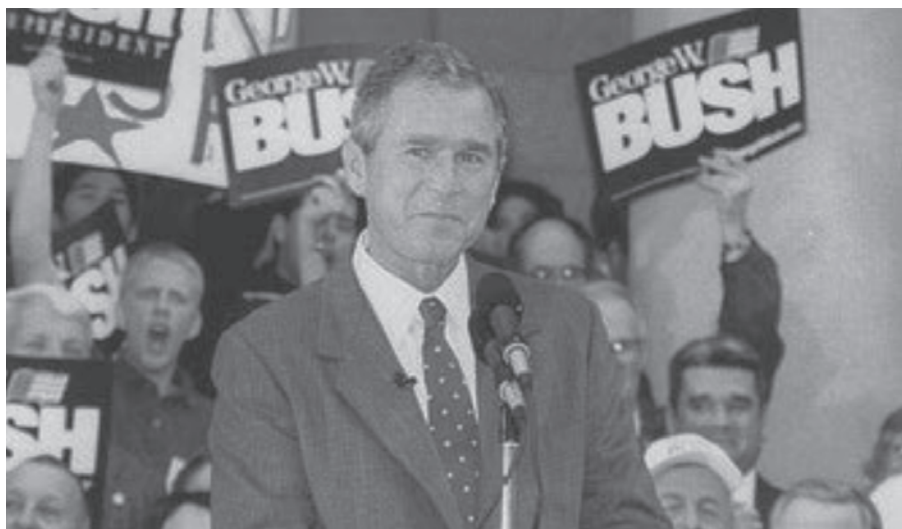
42nd PRESIDENT Bill Clinton, Dover
Won 1996 Primary



45th PRESIDENT Donald J. Trump, State House Filing
Won 2016 Primary



44th PRESIDENT Barack Obama, Concord High School
Won 2012 Primary



43rd PRESIDENT George W. Bush, State House Rally
Won 2004 Primary